

# High-Speed Rail Benefits for Niagara Falls

## Why Do We Need High-Speed Rail?

According to a recent memo from the Progressive Policy Institute:

- High-speed rail will create hundreds of thousands of well-paid jobs. By some measures, every \$1 billion spent in high-speed rail construction will create 15,000 direct jobs-and tens of thousand more will grow from operating and maintaining the train system. These are jobs that cannot be outsourced.
- High-speed rail makes economic sense. The United States population will increase from 300 million to more than 390 million by mid-century. Those citizens will need transportation, and high-speed rail is cheaper to build and causes much less environmental damage than new highways and airports.
- High-speed rail has a proven record of economic development. With station stops located every 30 or 40 miles between terminals, high-speed rail has spurred growth in rural France and Spain. Fast, efficient transportation could bring similar benefits to economically depressed Main Street.
- High-speed rail is a big step toward energy independence. Present day diesel powered trains use 27 percent less energy per passenger mile than cars and 21 percent less than airplanes, according the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. If high-speed rail corridors were operated with nonpolluting electric locomotives, they could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by as much as six billion pounds annually, according to the Center for Clean Air Policy.
- High-Speed rail is almost infinitely expansible. A double track railway, once in place, can meet heavy traffic needs with no additional capital expenditures except more trainsets. Highways and airports, on the other hand, require more lanes, and runways to accommodate greater traffic loads

The United States Department of Transportation [reported](#) that an investment in public transportation creates almost 20 percent more jobs than the same investment in building roads or highways.

## Improved Rail Across New York Holds Great Benefit for Niagara Falls

- **Connecting Niagara Falls to High-Speed Rail:** As high-speed rail is built across Upstate New York from Buffalo to Albany, Niagara Falls will be connected to the

improved network. The Buffalo-Niagara Region's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan includes proposed commuter rail service between Buffalo and Niagara Falls and two additional light-rail transit corridors that would integrate with service at the Exchange Street station in Buffalo.

- **Strengthening Trade:** The United States and Canada are already the largest trading partners in the world. The existing rail plan would strength bi-national trade and travel in the Toronto-Hamilton, Niagara-Buffalo international corridor and across the Niagara frontier. Currently the Niagara Frontier carries 16% of all US-Canada trade crossings.
- **Making Niagara Falls a Freight Hub:** As trade strengthens, so too will the movement of freight by rail. Currently CSX operates the track across all of Upstate NY. Their Empire Corridor is their busiest corridor in the nation, currently sharing passenger and freight rail on the same tracks. With a third rail dedicated to passenger travel the movement of freight across NY increases. Niagara Falls is strategically located to be a freight hub for international trade.
- **Helping Local Businesses:** Over 200 Buffalo Niagara businesses across a number of industries – most prevalently advanced manufacturing and agribusiness – depend heavily on rail for delivery and shipment of their goods. Also, several Buffalo Niagara businesses directly supply the rail industry, employ over 350 workers and have sales in excess of \$40 million annually. Increasing rail services helps local businesses.
- **Increasing Tourism:** An improved rail network makes Niagara Falls far more accessible to New Yorkers from across the state. With more transportation options, New Yorkers will become more mobile traveling to new parts of the state increasing local tourism. Niagara Falls is an obvious beneficiary of increased tourism.
- **A more mobile labor force is a greater draw for economic development:** Within close proximity to Buffalo, Niagara Falls has a potential to reap the benefits commuters traveling to and from Niagara Falls, Buffalo and Rochester each day. With travel time less than an hour from point-to-point, the more mobile Western New York labor market expands to 955,562 workers, a greater draw for economic development.